

Project 5 Concepts & Early Prototype

ABSTRACT

This paper presents concepts and a storyboard prototype for our application: Aspire Higher. This paper covers concepts, a storyboard prototype and design decisions with justifications. The intent of this paper is to present how a potential user would interact with the application which is still undergoing design and revision.

Keywords

user experience; GUI;

1. INTRODUCTION

Our application is named Aspire Higher and is intended to track the formation and progress of user defined goals. The application's purpose is to provide users with a methodology to plot a goal-centric trajectory in their endeavors. Although there are a number of other products currently available which help users create "To Do Lists," the intent of Aspire Higher is to optimize the user intent for accomplishment and to add an accountability feature. According to an article from Forbes online, a study conducted by the University of Scranton has shown that 8% of people reach their New Year's Resolutions [1]. The application will be a mobile one so that the user will have access to it in several settings.

The target users of the application are people who are attempting to balance their career, schoolwork, and/or personal life. An application like Aspire Higher is necessary because users will have more than one goal they are actively pursuing and a busy schedule. Users will be familiar with using mobile applications, and they carry their phone around enough so that they will be able to see notifications in real time.

2. Concepts

2.1 Concept #1

Concept 1 allows the user to create a broad goal and then create a group of smaller sub-goals that act as steps to achieving the broader goal. The emphasis for Concept 1 is to have the user define measurable outcomes which can be evaluated by the user so that the user can evaluate their own achievements.

For this concept, the calendar, the list of actions, and the reminders are the most prominent features. This screen shows a home page, with an overview of what is left to accomplish this week.

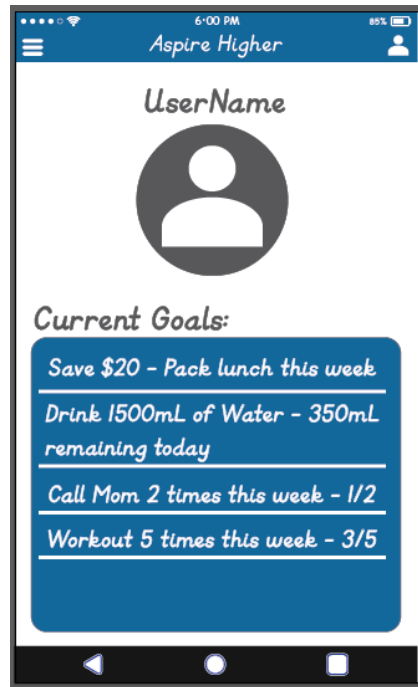


Fig 1. Concept 1: Home Page

This concept's intent is to prompt the user to define the steps intended to achieve the goal. Much of the emphasis is on the user making decisions on how to best achieve these goals within a measurable framework.



Fig. 2. Concept 1: Broader Goal with Sub-Goals Screen

The initial interaction with this concept is designed to pull users into using it by creating their first goal prior to creating an account for the application. In this process we decided to simplify the first page the user interacts with to what you see below.



Fig. 3 Concept 1: Welcome Page

2.2 Concept #2

Concept 2 presents the user with a list of common goals and asks the user to select a category before providing an additional definition of the goal. However, the user can also define a custom goal if their goal does not fit into any of the available categories. With this design, the emphasis is placed on the creation of a single goal, rather than multiple sub-goals to act as steps towards achieving a much broader goal.

Depending on how the user decides to frame the smaller goals, they could in theory use these smaller goals as steps to achieving a broader goal. However, the main idea is to have the user define smaller goals that can be achieved over a defined period of time.

Concept 2 also focuses more on gamification and social aspects. Though the calendar and goal information is available, there is also a progress bar and a “level” showing, which make the application seem more like a game.



Fig. 4. Concept 2: Goal selection screen

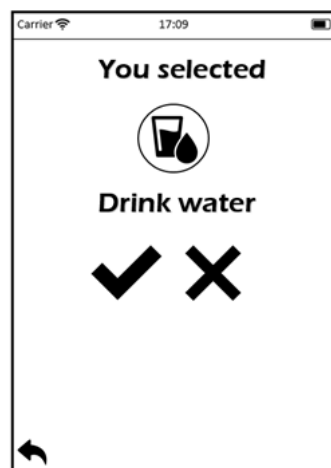


Fig. 5. Concept 2: Goal Confirmation Screen



Fig. 6. Concept 2: Goal Definition Screen with Frequency

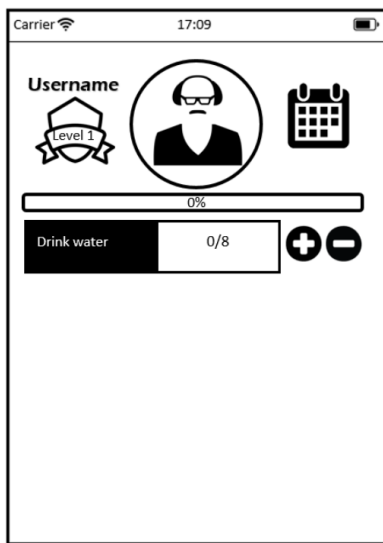


Fig. 7. Concept 2: Homepage

3. Prototype Storyboard and Discussion

3.1 Discussion on Design Revisions

Based on our feedback from the design concepts gallery we have decided to merge the ideas from the two concepts into one design based on the following observations:

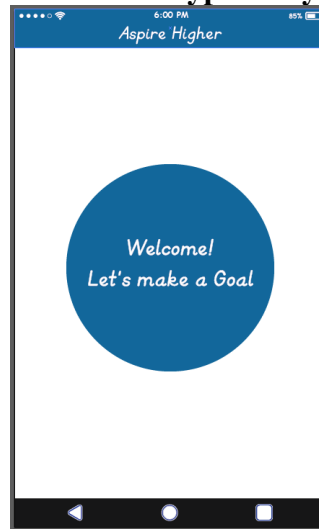
The majority of our feedback revolved around design and entertainment concepts. According to peer feedback, concept 1 had a friendlier interface. We also received a lot of positive feedback on the charting features found in Concept 1. Concept 1 was focused on design and layout more than content and workflow for the users. As a result of this focus some key features were not represented in the design. Many of our peers really liked Concept 2's social features, specifically the implementation of allowing the user to gain experience from completed goals and being able to share their achievements with other users in their network.

Concept 2 also demonstrated a greater level of clarity in how users create goals, and it focused on entertainment. Our peers preferred Concept 2 because it linked goal progress to the user rather than acting as a place to record goals like a diary. Over time a user can

earn experience, which provides incentives for users to continue using the app to complete goals.

As a result of the feedback for the two concepts, we have decided to merge elements from both concepts into the current design prototype. For the prototype, we decided to keep Concept 1's welcome screen, but we used Concept 2's design to move into account creation right after the first goal is created so that the users can start gaining 'experience' right away. This differs from Concept 1's initial design, where upon seeing the welcome screen, users would automatically be taken to the goal selection screen. Based on the feedback we received, many of our peers felt that placing a greater emphasis on the social features, such as the level and experience features, would make the application more fun to use and could potentially motivate users to stay on top of their goals. The goal creation screen migrated from Concept 1's list to icons with brief descriptions as shown in Concept 2. Our feedback suggested that the icons from Concept 2 were better not only visually, but sufficient for the user to understand without the descriptions. Consequently, Concept 2's descriptions that accompanied the goal icons were dropped and we instead combined the icons with Concept 1's design. When viewing individual goals we will use the layout from Concept 1 that provides a charting mechanism to view progress, as we also received positive feedback from this feature as well. The homescreen has also changed to reflect the integration of Concept 2's social features.

3.2 Prototype Storyboard



This screen is what you see when you first open the application. The goal here is to guide the user to set a goal before moving into other details of the application like social feeds and account creation.



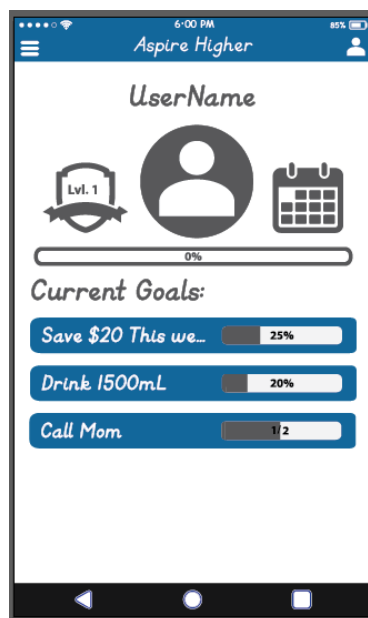
This is similar to what the user will see next. Essentially it's a list of categories that link to goals and subgoals that they can set. Whenever someone presses the "create new goal" button this is the page they will see. The first time through they will have a different prompt at the top of the page.



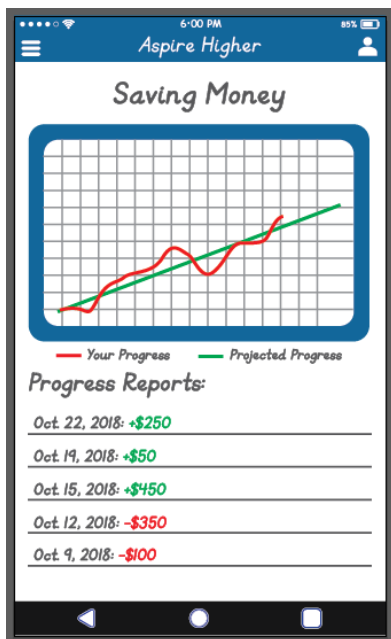
When creating a goal we want to give the user control of how individual tasks are broken up. If someone wants to save for a trip they will set an overall goal to save a certain amount. Once the final goal is established they will be able to create subgoals that can automatically re-occur. For instance, with a savings plan they may have a certain amount to put away from each paycheck. This will also allow users to gain experience from smaller objectives on their way to a bigger goal.



Once their first goal is created they will be asked to create an account to begin tracking their experience. Over time goals and experience points will accrue on the account and having a profile makes it simple to access data on multiple devices.



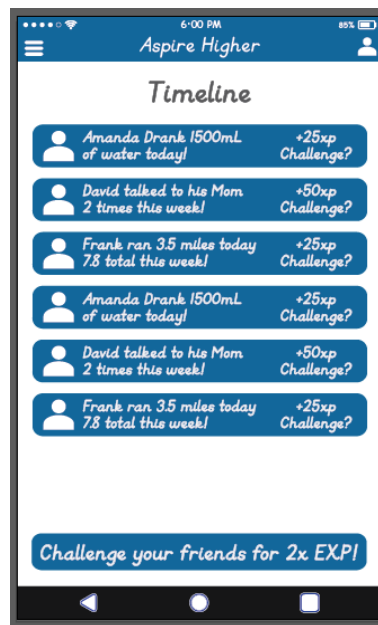
Once the account is created they will be taken to the homepage. Here they will be able to access the calendar by pressing the corresponding icon. Additionally user profile information (selecting the picture), past goals (selecting the shield and level icon), and current goals are accessed through this page. This serves as the primary way a user is able to access his or her goals.



When a user selects an individual goal from the homepage they will be directed to a screen similar to the one shown above. Here they can see their current progress towards any goal. For long term goals such as saving for a vacation you may keep track of subgoals and have a visual representation of your progress and expected result.



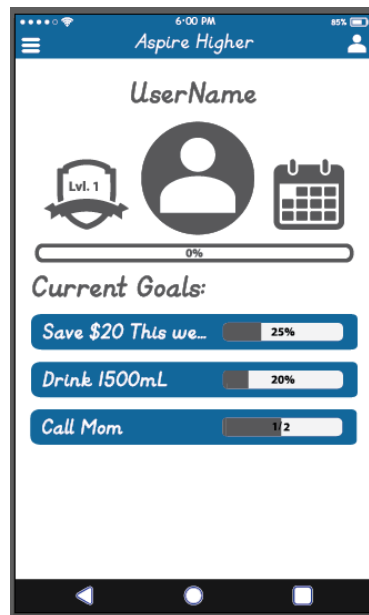
Above is the calendar screen. It displays goals broken down into each day. In this concept there is only one goal per day, but in reality the icons would be scaled down to show several types of goals per day. The objective of this screen is to allow yourself to plan ahead in your goal making process. The bottom displays a simple summary of upcoming goals in the near future.



The timeline can be accessed through the sidebar menu (not shown). Here you can see what goals your friends are setting and how they are doing on them. This could be a great way for people to work together towards common goals at long distances. The challenge option would give people the ability to gain extra experience by completing the same goals as others. If you can match someone else's goal you can both receive double exp.

4. Justifications

Design Decision #1: Homepage



One of our biggest design decisions was what the home screen should look like. What would users do most often, and what view of the information would help most? We considered several ideas, including showing a brief overview with easy access to more information about current goals, making the 'add a goal' screen show up first, or a simplified calendar view with just the day's tasks. We created a homepage with these ideas in mind, as the user would likely spend the most time on the homepage. It displays the

user's active goals, current level, level progress, and a link to the calendar that will show user's how well they did on previous dates. Therefore, the majority of Concept 1's design carried over into the prototype.

Justification:

We wanted to show the most relevant information to the users. Most of these concepts come from Concept 1, but we added the user's experience level due to the peer feedback that the gamification was important.

Design Decision #2: Goal Selection

The "Goal Selection" screen has a number of preset categories that are selected which are intended for the user to select by touching their mobile device screen. We believe that having preset categories will encourage the user to make a goal that is measurable and definable.

Justification:



For example, if a person made a goal to "Be a Kinder Person," this would be a difficult endeavor since this has not been defined or categorized in any way. From our research interviews our interviewees indicated that they were more motivated to accomplish their goals if they were clearly defined because then they would know if they had accomplished the goal or not. The goal selection screen would encourage someone with a vague goal such as "To Be a Kinder Person," into something that can be defined and thus achievable. For instance, a kind person might volunteer their time once a week. In this particular situation a vague goal becomes more concrete and thus more achievable.

Design Decision #3: "All Goals" removed

The "All Goals" screen has been incorporated into the prototype to allow the user to see all active goals and their current progress.



Justification:

From our research interviews we had found that some of the interviewees did not bother to check-in and determine if they were making significant progress on the completion of their goals. Some of the interviewees indicated that they would simply make their goal in their head and not even write it down. The interviewee would then rely on memory to make progress on the goal. This habit is especially problematic due to the limitations of human memory. As our textbook indicates, people are only able to remember seven chunks of information plus or minus two [2]. Therefore we decided that there should be a screen to allow the user to see a current snapshot of open goals and progress. This may also help to provide continued motivation for the user as well.

Design Decision #4: Sub-Goals

After making several considerations, the group decided to incorporate a base goal with a sub-goal model. We decided that this would set the user on a path to make gradual progress to an overall broader goal versus a prior design concept which would have framed all goals as one task for completion.



Justification:

From the interviews conducted during the research process we noticed that a number of interviewees made goals regarding their fitness. Some interviewees wanted to achieve weight loss. Other interviewees want to build their strength to bench press their own

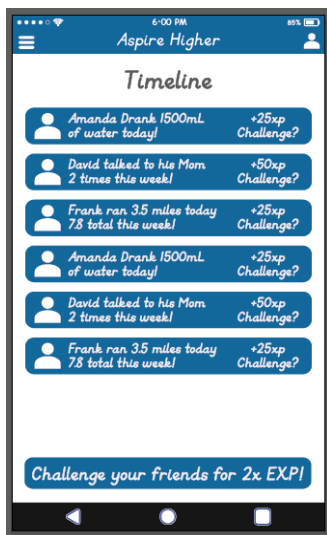
weight. When we attempted to conceptualize the completion of these particular goals it did not appear feasible for a person to “Lose 20 Pounds” or “Bench Press Their Own Body Weight,” without smaller goals to lead the user on this path.

Design Decision #5: Social Integration

After considering our user base, we decided to add a social aspect. Thus, we added a timeline of friends achieving their goals, and a way to ‘challenge’ other people. Most applications presently have a social component. Therefore a feature with this type of element would be expected by most users.

The timeline would allow users to share their accomplishments and cheer on their friends. Some of the interviewees indicated that they felt embarrassed by not achieving their goals, or that they felt insecure when they did not do as well as they would have liked. We’d like to be mindful of these challenges; we believe the timeline would allow users to have their accomplishments praised, focusing them on the positive side of how much they have accomplished, rather than what they have not accomplished. However, we do want to consider the fact that users might instead feel overwhelmed by how much everyone else has accomplished. Therefore, the timeline (as well as the rest of the social aspects) are not the central aspect of the app, and it would be easy to use the app without these features.

Justification:



Several of the interviewees mentioned that accountability partners help them in achieving their goals. Adding the ability to accomplish goals in groups would then make the users better able to achieve their goals.

Since many of our users would already be motivated people, we

also thought that a competition would be a great way to take advantage of their nature to make them achieve their goals. Since competitions are also social, it also means that other people will hold the user accountable for their goals.

Design Decision #6: Goal creation process

After conducting multiple interviews and researching what our user needs, an important feature was analytics. In our Individual Goal breakdown and our Homepage, users have the ability to see how well they are following their goals. More specifically, they are provided a graph of how they have done in the past, and they are given a percentage to see if they are on track to completing their goals. Specifically with the individual goal breakdown page, users get to see their progress throughout the year. We compare their actual progress with their projected progress.

Justification:

After conducting multiple interviews, several of the interviewees indicated they do not track their progress for their goals, or they track progress with very simple tools such as notes. It seems like users are focused on setting goals, but they are not focused on seeing if they are on track to completing their goals. This is a concern for us because we want to optimize our applications so users can achieve their goals. In order to achieve their goals, they need to stay on track with their projected progress.

Specifically with design, we implemented several principles into the Individual Goal breakdown page. Beginning with chunking, we decided to have progress and graphs for each goal specifically. Users can see how well they are doing for a specific goal. In the specific page, we utilize colors and graphs to make the data easy to read. With the colors red and green, they can see how specific actions have impacted their goal. Green symbolizes success while red indicates not achieving the task.

Overall, we tried to make this page as simple to read as possible. There is a reason why people do not like tracking their own goals. It is a hassle to record and read. Our application does it for them and displays it in a manner that is easy to recognize..

5. REFERENCES

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- [2] Preece, Rogers, & Sharp. 2015. *Interaction Design: Beyond Human-Computer Interaction*. (4th. ed.). New York, NY.